

# State of Maryland Commission on Civil Rights



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Salisbury University Partners with MCCR to Offer Safe Spaces Training Statewide**

### *Free Program Aims to Make All Environments Welcoming of LGBTQI Individuals*

**Salisbury, MD** – Salisbury University's Safe Spaces Workshop is now being offered statewide through a partnership with the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (MCCR).

"Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning and intersex (LGBTQI) people frequently find themselves excluded and uncomfortable in a variety of settings," said Dr. Diane Illig, Safe Spaces training coordinator and chair of SU's Sociology Department. "Our program explores how to create more welcoming environments at work, school and in the community. We teach participants how to promote 'safe spaces' of respect, acceptance and support for all."

The program has been offered, in various formats, to faculty, staff and students at SU since the late 1990s.

Since the MCCR partnership began in July, the training team has expanded its efforts, conducting workshops twice for MCCR, as well as the Maryland Department of Human Resources, Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, and Cecil County Department of Social Services. The workshop also has been offered three times on campus. In total, some 170 have participated - an increase from the 111 who were trained in 2013-14.

"This was an excellent session; have more of them!" one participant said, while others called it "a wonderful opportunity to better understand and promote tolerance and equality" and helpful in "recognizing that non-action is a choice."

Through the workshop, participants develop an understanding of the experiences of LGBTQI people; identify sources of unwelcoming behaviors; learn LGBTQI-inclusive terminology; learn to dispel negative stereotypes; develop strategies to create more welcoming environments; and

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formulate effective responses to many of the issues and scenarios that LGBTQI people experience in their workplace, school or community.

Illig has taught courses on gender, sexuality and family at SU for 14 years. The other trainers are Paula Morris of SU's Management and Marketing Department and Dr. Michèle Schlehofer, chair of SU's Psychology Department. Morris founded Kids of Honor and is active with other youth and leadership initiatives. Schlehofer is an applied social psychologist with interests in community health and well-being.

MCCR provides services, information and support to agencies, businesses, organizations and individuals in Maryland regarding issues of equal access and opportunity. SU's Safe Spaces workshop is one of 13 to be offered through its Community Outreach and Education program. Others explore topics including conflict resolution, diversity, disabilities, religion, sexual harassment, discrimination and more.

SU faculty and staff may attend a free Safe Spaces workshop hosted by the University's Office of Institutional Equity 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Tuesday, November 18, in Blackwell Library Room 142. To register, visit: <http://www.salisbury.edu/equity/programs/rsvp/>.

To request the Safe Spaces Workshop through MCCR, contact Tara Taylor, Education and Outreach director at 410-767-6459 or [tara.taylor@maryland.gov](mailto:tara.taylor@maryland.gov).

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